ISSN-0971-927X

PATHWAY TO GOD

A Quarterly Journal of spiritual life
devoted to religion. Philosophy, Mysticism & Science of Yoga

Vol. XXXVII **JAN. - MAR. 2002** **No. 2**

ACADEMY OF COMPARATIVE PHILOSOPHY & RELIGION, Belgaum.

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(ISSN-0971-927x)

Vol. XXXVII No.2
JANUARY - MARCH
2002

ONE GOD
ONE WORLD
ONE HUMANITY

PRICE : Rs. 25.00
ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION
India (Bharat) Rs. 75-00
Foreign US$ 8-00
(By Airmail)

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✦ Published by :
Academy of Comparative
Philosophy & Religion
Hindwadi, Belgaum - 590 011.
☎ : (0831) 467231, Fax : 91-831-451584

✦ Printed At :
Swastik Printing Press
Huns Talkies Road, Belgaum-590 002.
☎ : 421029 (O), 480912 (R)

Articles on related topics, solicited. They should be typed on one side of paper with Double spacing. Views expressed in this Magazine are entirely of the concerned authors.

Prayer to Lord Rudra Shiva

(Stanzawise Translation in English)

नमो निषङ्‌गिण इषुधिमते तस्कराणां पतये नमः ॥३॥
I salute the Lord with Sword in hand and also having the bow and arrow, who is controller of the confirmed thieves.

नमो वञ्चते परिवञ्चते स्तायूनां पतये नमः ॥४॥
I salute the Lord who is watchful of the deceivers as well as the deceipt going around.

नमो निचेरवे परिचरायारण्यानां पतये नमः ॥५॥
I salute the Lord who is on the lookout to help the needy and who is also the controller of the thieves in the forest.

नमः सृकाविभ्यो जिघाँसद्भ्यो मुष्णतां पतये नमः ॥६॥
I salute the Lord who carries the mace for punishing and who is the controller of robbers.

नमोऽसिमद्भ्यो नक्तंचरद्भ्यः प्रकृंतानां पतये नमः ॥७॥
I salute the Lord who carries the sword and moves at night and who is the controller of those who kill for thieving.

नम उष्णीषिणे गिरिचराय कुलुञ्चानां पतये नमः ॥८॥
I salute the Lord who moves in the mountains with a turban and diadem on his head and who is the controller of those who plunder the farms.

नम इषुमद्भ्यो धन्वाविभ्यश्च वो नमो ॥९॥
The salute the Lord who carries the bow and arrows.

नम आतन्वानेभ्यः प्रतिदधानेभ्यश्च वो नमो ॥१०॥
I salute the Lord who puts the arrow to the bow (to attack) and answers the enemy's attack.

नम आयच्छद्भ्यो विसृजद्भ्यश्च वो नमो ॥११॥
I salute the Lord who pulls the bow-string and puts the arrow in position (to attack)

नमोऽस्यद्भ्यो विध्यद्भ्यश्च वो नमो ॥१२॥
I salute the Lord who flings his arrows (on the enemy) and whose arrows pierce the target right on the centre.

नम आसीनेभ्यः शयानेभ्यश्च वो नमो ॥१३॥
I salute the Lord who is seated and also when he is reclining for rest.

नमः स्वपद्भ्यो जाग्रद्भ्यश्च वो नमो ॥१४॥
I salute the Lord who is asleep and also when he is awake.

नमस्तिष्ठद्भ्यो धावद्भ्यश्च वो नमो ॥१५॥
I salute the Lord in the standing pose and in the running pose.

नमः सभाभ्यः सभापतिभ्यश्च वो नमो ॥१६॥
I salute the Lord when attending the congregation as well as when heading the congregation.

नमो अश्वेभ्योऽश्वपतिभ्यश्च वो नमः ॥१७॥
I salute the Lord in the form of the horse as well as in the form of the horse rider.

चिंत्याकमाडती

(The Kannada Poem composed by the Saint of Nimbargi in the Devanagari Script)

चिंत्याकमाडती शिवने अदानेळु प्राणी चिंत्याकमाडती ।।प।।
उदकदल्लिउत्पत्ति माडुवऱ्यारु । होट्यानशिशुवनु सलहुवऱ्यारु ।
साकिनिन्न जोकिमाडिदवने अदानेळु प्राणी ।।१।।
हिंदनिन्न सलहिदवऱ्यारु । मुंदनिन्न कोल्लुवऱ्यारु ।
अंदीगिंदीगेंदीगादरु शिवने अदानेकु प्राणी ।।२।।
अंतरलि अंबर इट्टवऱ्यारु । रविशशिमार्गव नडिसुवऱ्यारु ।
गुरुलिंगजंगम सर्वेशाता शिवने अदानेळु प्राणी ।।३।।

Re-orientation

Get up O man, get not worried;
For there is Shiva, the Lord of all Lords.
Who do'th create the creatures in Water ?
Who do'th nurture the baby in the womb ?
Isn't it that the Lord hath reared and shielded you up?
Get up O man, get not worried;
For there is Shiva, the Lord of all Lords.
Who did foster you in the past ?
Who'ld terminate you in the future ?
Isn't it that the Lord was-is-and-would be for ever and ever?
Get up O man, get not Worried;
For there is Shiva, the Lord of all Lords.
Who did put the sky yonder and above ?
Who do'th move the Sun and the Moon in the path celestial?
Isn't it that the Gurulinga Jangama is none but Shiva, the Lord of all Lords ?
Get up O man, get not Worried;
For there is Shiva, the Lord of all Lords.

Transcreated by :

- Prof. Yashwant Achar
H.No.45, Heerabagh, Udupi.

Thus Spake Gurudeo...

We are free to do our actions as we like in the process of attainment of highest illumination. If we are activists by temper, nothing can prevent us from doing actions at any stage of our progress towards attainment of our ideal. If we are contemplatives, nothing can stir us from a life of God-enjoyment to which we are naturally born, and put the principle of action a little away to which we were not born. Finally, if we are philosophers, our issue will be how best to determine the nature of the highest Reality and leave the rest to God. Temperamental differences may be modulated but they cannot be so radically changed as to wear an entirely new aspect altogether.

(Bhagvadgita as a Philosophy of God Realisation, P.207)

Ādi Śaṃkara does not rely on the Śrutis as they are. Śruti cannot contradict itself; nor can it contradict other Pramāṇas. There are passages in his commentaries from which it is beyond doubt that he goes ahead of the Śrutis. Thus in Gitābhāsya, Śaṃkara, commenting upon the 66th Śloka of XVIII Adhyāyā, says that even if hundreds of Śrutis were to say that fire is cold and without light, they will not be authoritative. As there is limitation to reason, so there is limitation to revelation too. And therefore he points out Saṃrādhana or intuition as the final criterion.

(Vedas as Culmination of Indian Thought, P.70)

□□

EDITORIAL

Man's Course of Life in This World

Man is ushered in the course of his life as a child born to his parents and grows into an adult individual in due course of time. Since childhood, the individual interacts with his surroundings. These interactions form the inner personality of the individual who further interacts with the world and decides his course of life in society. If a child is left in a jungle, he interacts with the animals and plants and chalks out his course of life. If a child is selected by the lamas and taken to the lamasery, as is customary in Tibet, the child grows in the company of lamas and his life takes its course accordingly. If the child grows in a household family, his interactions make him understand that he has to educate himself in schools, colleges, etc. and earn his livelihood in due course to seek happiness in his own way, as done by those in the surroundings. Thus, the individual is busy making his mark in his studies, career and earning wealth to the best of his ability to seek happiness in the world. This goes on, till the individual becomes advanced in age and death stalks him. If he looks back and ponders over what his aim in life was and what he has achieved, there will not be a definite answer. Because the material and physical pleasures are transient; they only increase one's greed and happiness remains elusive.

The concept developed by most religions is to produce a moral and ethical individual out of a man so that brotherhood and altruism are built up in society which then becomes an integral unit, ensuring the welfare of the individual and prosperity of society as a common goal. Even in developed countries and wealthy societies, it cannot be said that all individuals have at least the subsistence level of daily food and a roof overhead to sleep at night. Though disparity is in the nature of the world due to competitiveness, which is essential to create efficiency, its high degree can be reduced by the combined effort of society to ensure the minimum subsistence level to any individual.

Even if the quality of life is improved in the economic sense, happiness is elusive, as experienced in wealthy societies in which the youth take to different addictions like drugs, etc. as the desire for happiness remains unsatiated. If this is the state of affairs of a developed society, why should an individual go through the maze of networks of activities from childhood to old age? Does it indicate a wrong direction ? Does it need to be renounced ? These are the questions which remain unanswered.

The ancient sages who planned the Hindu way of life looked at the whole evolutionary span from manhood to godhood as one continuous lifespan, dotted by births and rebirths for progress of the individual towards godhood. The time period from the birth of an individual to the death of his body is but a minuscule part on the evolutionary scale. The small lifespan of one birth is planned in such a way that the progress of the individual in the next birth is also ensured.

The Hindu way of life accepts the need of material pleasures of wealth and sex for the common man, but advises regulation. Thus, it prescribes one conjugal partner throughout one's life and for wealth, one should realise that all wealth belongs to God and we are just trustees on His behalf. The *Bhagavad Gita* also asks us to lead an active life for the good of the society but without greed or selfish possessiveness. The saints say we should lead a family life as a duty enjoined by the Almighty.

Through the various religious festivals and worship of the variety of deities, who are but incarnations of the Supreme Self, man is reminded that there are higher powers and life after death. If one is able to grasp the inner meaning of the superficial rituals, it is obvious that it is meant to establish at least an indirect contact with the Supreme Being, which may not fructify in the current birth or even the next, but certainly in a future birth. The planning of life is such that greed and desires get reduced from birth to birth. After death, i.e. casting off the gross body, the individual moves out with the subtle body and the bundle of his desires and takes rebirth in surroundings which are likely to fulfil his desires. Ultimately, when no more desires remain to be fulfilled, the individual remains in the subtle body and does not take rebirth. When he looks down on life on earth, it appears to him to be a meaningless maze of activities that do not attract him. He prefers to remain in the company of other elevated souls to enjoy supreme bliss. These are the words of sages and elevated souls who communicate with men who have attained realisation.

According to the Indian philosophy, everyman is to ultimately reach Godhood. The time or number of births is however not the same. A common man weaves such a thick web of worldly activities around himself that he is not able to extricate himself in scores of births. On the other hand, a man who is determined, discriminative and introspective, looks at the world in an analytical mood and gets the right perspective of worldly activities very soon, renounces the world in his inner being, participates in the common activities in a detached manner, progresses speedily on the path of the progress of the spirit and achieves the goal may be in the same birth or in one or two rebirths. The scriptures accordingly describe two paths for realisation of the truth or Godhood. One is the path of the ant which is slow and winding. The other is that of the bird, which, with a swish of its wings hops from the ground to top of the tree.

One needs to, however, remember that without the base of moral and mental discipline in one's behaviour, ethical dealings with altruism and equality to all and right detached perspective of the world, no progress is possible on the spiritual path in spite of any number of ritualistic worships or hours of mere mechanical chanting of God's name as meditation.

□□

The Mystic may be a philosopher but is not necessarily so. His mystic experience is sufficient for his own elevation into Divinity; but if he philosophizes, he may raise thinking humanity into a Divine-Kingdom of Ends.

- (Mysticism in Maharashtra P.394)

(Continued from last issue)

Śankarācārya's Ātmabodha

(Sanskrit Script followed by English translation)

(48)

आत्मैवेदं जगत् सर्वमात्मनोऽन्यन्न किंचन ।
मृदो यद्वद् घटादीनि स्वात्मानं सर्वमीक्षते ॥४८॥

(Jars, etc. are made from clay. Hence the jars are nothing but clay. Hence a wise man thinks that) the jars, etc. are not different from clay. Likewise the jīvanmukta sees (with the eye of knowledge) that this entire world is the Self only, that there is nothing different / apart from Ātman and that all (that is) is his own Self (48).

Explanation : Jars, etc. that are made from the clay are not different from the clay. Now, in case of a jīvanmukta there is a vision of oneness. So he knows :- The world being superimposition on Ātman i.e. himself is not different from Ātman i.e. himself. There is nothing except Ātman. As he himself is Ātman, he knows that he himself is everything. There is nothing beside himself.

Here again it is to be remembered that the above is understood by the jīvanmukta, with the vision of knowledge only. From practical point of view, there is the world and there is worldly dealing based on plurality and difference in the world. Yet he knows that from the transcendental view-point, there world, etc. are not different from their basis namely the Self.

• • •

So long as a jīvanmukta is living, he has to stay in this world. But now his mental condition is changed and is different from the past one. That is declared in the next verse No.49.

(49)

जीवन्मुक्तस्तु तद् विद्वान् पूर्वोपाधि-गुणांस्त्यजेत्[19] ।
स सच्चिदादि-धर्मत्वं भेजे भ्रमर-कीटवत् ॥४९॥

(Now) the jīvanmukta who has realised (vidvan) that (unity of everything) abandons[19] the attributes / features of (his) previous upadhis, and resorts[19] to attributes like existence, sentience, etc; like insect-bee (49).

Explanation : The usual import of the example of the bee-insect is as follows :- An insect is caught by a bee and is placed in its own place. The insect then through constant contemplation (nididhyāsa) of the bee gives up its features as an insect and secures the features of the bee i.e. it itself becomes the bee.

As a human being the jīvanmukta has the upādhis like body, senses, mind and intellect. The attributes / features of these upādhis are :- body is fair or black, tall or small and so on : Deafness, lameness, etc. are the qualities of the senses. Hunger, thirst arose due to vital breaths. Series of thoughts, pain and pleasure are the qualities of the mind. Decision / determination is the feature of the intellect. The jīvanmukta, before he had realised the Self, used to think that all these qualities of his upādhis belonged to him. Hence he used to say : "I am dark complexioned; I am deaf; I am hungry; I always think; I am happy; I have decided to do this", and so on. Later on he realised the Self; he came to know that these attributes of the upādhis like body etc. are not his own.

He as the Self is different from all those upādhis. So he abandons them i.e. he gives up his attachment to them, he gives up the egoism that they are his. After realising the Self he takes up or procures the features of Ātman namely existence, sentience and bliss.

Here we have to clearly understand what is meant by the statement namely "he gives up this qualities of upādhis". So long as jīvanmukta is living, he has the upādhis like body, etc. He gives up their qualities which simply means : Now he does not think that the qualities of upādhis are his own; his attachment to them is now given up by him. His sense of mineness over them is no more there. For he has realised that he being the Ātman is not those upādhis and he has nothing to do with their qualities. Now his conviction is : "I as the Ātman am completely distinct from upādhis like body, etc. and hence their attributes do not belong to me. I am only Ātman / Brahman". Hence he throws off his sense of mineness over the upādhis and their qualities. He is not now affected by the attributes of the upādhis (even though the latter continue to be with him till his death).

Another example can be given to illustrate the present state of a jīvanmukta : So long as a coconut-fruit was wet, the copra inside it was sticking to the shell. But when the copra is completely dried up, the dried up roundish Kernel-copra becomes detached from the shell. Then even though it is inside the shell, it is not sticking to the shell, but it has become aloof from the shell. Jīvanmukta is like the roundish kernel-copra. Till his death he has the upādhis of the body, senses, etc. Yet giving up his attachment to the upādhis and their attributes, he has become aloof from them.

• • •

(50)

तीर्त्वा मोहार्णवं हत्वा राग-द्वेषादि-राक्षसान् ।
योगी शांति-समायुक्त आत्मारामो विराजते ॥५०॥

After crossing over the ocean in the form of delusion/infatuation and after killing the giants / demons in the form of attachment, hatred etc., the yogi (=one who has become identical with Ātman/Brahman) who is now united with peace and who is taking rest in the Ātman only looks to advantage (50).

Explanation : Before the realisation of Brahman, every individual soul is merged in the ocean-like delusion which is due to Nescience. On the destruction of Nescience, the delusion of a jīvanmukta is over, he has as if crossed the ocean of infatuation. Prior to the realisation of the Self, every individual soul was thinking that the upādhis like the body etc. are his own. Hence there was abundance of passions like hatred, attachment and so on, due to the sense of mineness. And these demon-like passions were harassing or torturing him. Now the jīvanmukta yogin whose nescience has been destroyed does not become subject to the influence of passions like hatred, attachment, etc. He has as if killed the demons in the form of attachment, hatred and so on. Now, as the jīvanmukta is not caught in the web of attachment, hatred, etc. which create mental torture/trouble/pain/anxiety, etc. becomes united with peace/calm of the mind.

Now the jīvanmukta has become aloof from all upādhis. Now he has become one with the Self. Now the Self is as if his resting place. Now he does not seek rest and resting place anywhere in the world, as apart from the Self.

• • •

(51)

बाह्यानित्य-सुखासक्तिं हित्वात्मसुख-निर्वृतः ।
घटस्थ-दीपवच्छश्वदंतरेव प्रकाशते ॥५१॥

Giving up the attachment to external, non-eternal pleasures, the jīvanmukta who is fully satisfied with the bliss of the Self is constantly shining in himself, as a lamp inside a jar constantly shines within the jar (only) (51).

Explanation : The spiritual aspirant had from the start given up attachment to external and non-external pleasures arising from objects of enjoyment. He possessed detachment or aversion (vairāgya). Then after practising constant contemplation he has realised the Self. The Self is bliss only. This bliss is unique. Due to this bliss the jīvanmukta has become fully satisfied. Naturally now he is not at all interested in worldly pleasures. Ordinary persons receive pleasure from the external objects through the contact of senses with sensual objects. This pleasure is called external (bāhya), as it arises from external things. Moreover, it is not that a person will constantly derive pleasure from external things, as external things are transitory. That is why this external pleasure is non-permanent. All attachment to such external and non-external pleasure has been given up by the jīvanmukta. His self-joy is internal and permanent. Securing it, the jīvanmukta is now completely pleased and satisfied.

The jīvanmukta has become one with the Inner Self. The Inner Self is self-luminous (See Verse No.41). Hence the jīvanmukta as the Inner Self shines within or inside. This is illustrated here thus :- So long as a lamp was outside of the jar, it was shining outside. But when it was placed inside a jar, it began to shine inside the jar. Like the lamp inside a jar, the jīvanmukta shines inside (the body), and is happy / blissful within himself.

● ● ●

(52)

उपाधिस्थोऽपि तद्धर्मैरलिप्तो व्योमवन्मुनिः ।
सर्वविन्मूढवत् तिष्ठेद[50] सक्तो वायु[50] वच्चरेत् ॥५२॥

Just as the sky (inside upādhis like a jar, etc.) is not smeared / affected / defiled with the attributes of those upādhis, in the same way, the (jivanmukta) sage (though) inside the upādhis (like the body, etc.) is not smeared/affected with the attributes of those (upādhis). Though he is all-knowing (as he is identical with the all-knowing Self), he stays[50] like a fool/ignorant man. And like the wind, he (being unattached to anything) moves anywhere (52).

Explanation : The sky may be inside the upādhis like a jar, a house and so on. Yet it remains aloof from those upādhis and their attributes; the latter do not affect or defile the sky in any way. Like the sky is the jīvanmukta. A jīvanmukta till his death has to remain in his upādhis like the body, senses, etc. Yet, as seen in Verses Nos.44-50, he is aloof from his attachment to those upādhis and their attributes. Hence he is not smeared/defiled by those Upādhis and their good or bad qualities. Like the dried up roundish kernel-copra he is aloof from all Upādhis (See Verse No.49).

The Self is all-pervading and is of the nature of knowledge. Self is all-knowing, omniscient. Now the jīvanmukta who has become one with the Self becomes all-knowing. Yet sometimes he behaves, in his worldly dealings, like a fool or an ignorant man or a block-head. The reason is he does not want propaganda of his Self-realisation and he does not desire, on that account, any trouble from other people. But it must be remembered here that all the jīvanmuktas do not behave like foolish persons; many behave like sane/wise persons and some of them even preach Monism-alone.

The jīvanmukta has no attachment or no sense of mineness for his house, for his family, for his society or for any thing. Thus being free from attachment, he like the wind can move anywhere. It must be also noted here that many jīvanmuktas, though without any bond or fetters, stay with their families and continue their usual worldly dealings.

Here the word "muni" stands for the ātma-yogī/jīvanmukta who has become identical with the Self.

The description of a jīvanmukta comes to an end in this Verse No.52.

• • •

Those there are upādhis for a jīvanmukta, he is aloof from them. Now the next verse No.53 tells us what happens when after death his upādhis like body have been destroyed.

(53)

उपाधि-विलयाद् विष्णोर्निर्विशेषं विशेन्मुनिः ।
जले जलं वियद् व्योम्नि तेजस्तेजसि वा यथा ॥५३॥

Water (caught in upādhis), on the destruction of the upādhis, gets merged in water; the sky (within upādhis) at the destruction of upādhis becomes one with the (great) sky; light (confined in some upādhis), on the loss of those upādhis, enters into light. Likewise the sage *i.e. the jīvanmukta (who was limited by upādhis during his life-time), on the destruction of the upādhis, enters into the quality-less (nirviśeṣa) nature of the all-pervading Ātman[53] (viṣṇu)*

Explanation : Suppose, a bucket or a pot was placed in the water of a lake or a river. The bucket or the pot became the upādhis of water in the lake or the river. The water in the bucket or pot was considered to be different from that in the lake or river, due to those upādhis. But as soon as the upādhis like the bucket or pot were removed or broken, the water in them entered into the water of the river or the lake and became one with the latter.

As long as there was the upādhi of a jar or a house, there appeared jar-space or space in the house as something distinct from the great open space. But when the jar and the house were destructed, the sky inside them became identical with the great sky.

The light of the sun was inside upādhis like a hut, a house, a bunglow and a palace. But when those upādhis were destroyed, the light inside them merged in the light of the sun.

Now, the jīvanmukta till his death is with or in his upādhis like body, etc. After death the upādhis like body etc. get destroyed. Immediately the sage- the jīvanmukta- enters into the quality-less and all-pervading nature of Brahman and becomes one with Brahman. This state of being Brahman after death is called Videha- mukti.

Here the word "muni" (=sage) stands for the jīvanmukta, and the word "viṣṇu" means[51] the all-pervading Brahman / Ātman.

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The Self that is existence - sentience-bliss is the same[51-A] as Brahman. The words Ātman and Brahman are synonyms. So now employing the word Brahman, the latter is described in Verses Nos. 54-64 that follow.

(54)

यल्लाभान्नापरो लाभो यत्सुखान्नापरं सुखम् ।
यज्ज्ञा[52] नान्नापरं ज्ञानं तद् ब्रह्मेत्यवधारयेत् ॥५४॥

One should definitely understand that to be (that) Brahman apart from whose securation there is no other obtainment, apart from whose bliss there is no other joy, and apart[52] from whose knowledge there is no other knowledge (54).

Explanation : The word Brahman is derived from the root "Bṛmh". Its etymological meaning is to be the biggest or the largest of all. Naturally Brahman is what is the largest / biggest or what is the highest or the supreme. Now as Brahman is supreme or the most important of all, there cannot be any procuration higher than that of Brahman, there cannot be any pleasure equal to that of Brahman, and there cannot be any knowledge which will surpass that of Brahman, there cannot be any knowledge more fundamental or significant than that of Brahman. All achievements, all pleasures and all knowledges in the world are unworthy of their names or are quite insignificant as compared to those of Brahman. In other words, the obtainment of Brahman is the most important, the bliss of Brahman is unexcelled / unsurpassed, and the knowledge of Brahman is the most significant of all. Thus Brahman is the most important and the most valued. Such Brahman is necessarily and surely to be understood by a spiritual aspirant.

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यद् दृष्ट्वा नापरं दृश्यं यद् भूत्वा न पुनर्भवः ।
यज्ज्ञा[53] त्वा नापरं ज्ञेयं तद् ब्रह्मेत्यवधारयेत् ॥५५॥

One should surely comprehend that to be Brahman after seeing which there does not remain any other thing fit / proper to be seen, after becoming (one with) which there is no rebirth, and after knowing[53] which there does not remain any other knowable (55).

Explanation : There are in this world many things like the sunrise, mountains, rivers, oceans, cinemas, forests, dramas and so on which are the objects of the act of seeing. But one who has seen Brahman does not desire to see anything other than Brahman. Moreover, as there is nothing apart from Brahman, there remains no visible thing, after the vision of Brahman.

Upaniṣads declare that one who knows Brahman becomes Brahman (Brahma veda brahmaiva bhavati). Brahman is forever non-born. Naturally one who has become identical with Brahman is never subject to any birth, death and rebirth. So long as a person was not knowing Brahman, he was caught in the upādhis like the body, due to nescience; he was subject to birth and death due to these[54] upādhis. But one who, being freed from upādhis, has become one with Brahman is never caught in the web or wheel of birth and rebirth.

According to the philosophy of Monism-alone, to secure the knowledge of Brahman is the highest aim of human life. Further, according to Upaniṣads, this world is nothing but Brahman (sarvam khalvidam Brahma). Naturally when one knows Brahman, it means that he knows everything. Hence an Upaniṣad has said, "After knowing one (Brahman) everything else is known". (Eka-vijnānena sarvaṃ vijnātaṃ bhavati). Consequently, when there is knowledge of Brahman, there does not remain any other knowable thing (= object of knowledge); for there is nothing knowable apart from Brahman.

That the Brahman is such is to be surely understood by a spiritual aspirant.

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(56)

तिर्यगूर्ध्वमधः पूर्णं सच्चिदानंदमद्वयम् ।
अनंतं नित्यमेकं यत् तद् ब्रह्मेत्यवधारयेत् ॥५६॥

One should definitely understand that to be that Brahman which (being all-pervading) is at place that are oblique, upward and downward (behind and in front also), which is perfect, which is existence-sentience-bliss, which is non-dual, boundless / infinite, eternal, and (only) one (56).

Explanation : This verse describes the nature of Brahman. Brahman being all-pervading is everywhere, at all places, behind and before, surrounding, up, down and oblique. It being one is non-dual; beside it there is no true existent principle; hence it is one without a second. It is existence-sentience-bliss. It, being existent (sat) at all times, is eternal and permanent. It is of the nature of consciousness and of the nature of bliss. The bliss of Brahman is objectless; it does not originate from any object of pleasure. It is infinite, without any limitations of place, time and things. Such Brahman is to be comprehended by a spiritual aspirant.

• • •

References :

49. Here the verbs "tyajet" and "Bheje" are to be understood in the sense of the present tense.

50. The potential forms "tisthet" and "caret" here are to be understood in the sense of present tense.

51. The word "viṣṇu" is derived from the verb "vi ṣ" which means to pervade. Hence Vi ṣṇu means (all-) pervading i.e. Brahman or Ātman.

51-A. आत्माच ब्रह्म । (ब्रह्मसूत्र - शांकरभाष्य)

52. The Poona-edition reads "यज्ञानान्नापरं" which is a misprint. The correct reading is - - - "यज्ज्ञानान्नापरं".

48. The reading "यज्ञात्वा" in Poona-edition is a misprint. The correct word is - - - "यज्ज्ञात्वा".

(To be continued)

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"If the Parliament of Religions has shown anything to the world, it is this : it has proved to the world that holiness, purity and charity are not the exclusive possessions of any church in the world and that every system has produced men and women of the most exalted character. In the face of this evidence, if anybody dreams of the exclusive survival of his own religion and the destruction of others, I pity him from the bottom of my heart, and point out to him that upon the banner of every religion will soon be written, in spite of resistance : 'Help and not Fight', 'Assimilation and not Destruction', 'Harmony and Peace, and not Dissension.'

The Koran extols the virtue of tolerance in its closing chapters : "To you your religion And to them theirs."

- Swami Vivekananda

(Continued from last issue)

Bhagwadgeeta & its exposition by Sant Dnyaneshwar

Chapter V ज्ञान योग

Renunciation of action

(Sanskrit Script followed by English translation)

संन्यासं कर्मणां कृष्ण पुनर्योगं च शंससि ।
यच्छ्रेय एतयोरेकं तन्मे ब्रूहि सुनिश्चितम् ॥१॥

Arjuna asked Shri Krishna -

After enunciating renunciation of action, you have again praised performance of action without attachment. Please tell me which of the two in one's best interests.

Saint Dnyaneshwar explains -

Arjuna says - Oh Krishna, you said that one should renounce all the actions through attainment of knowledge, and again you praise performance of action without attachment. How can one then decide which of the two is in one's best interest? Oh Krishna, one should propose one single pathway, so that one can adopt the same in one's life, without any doubts. Now, once you proposed renunciation of action through knowledge and again go back & praise the path of performance of action though without attachment. This does not appear sensible to a common man with ignorance. He is troubled by being in two minds as to which one should be chosen. The path of the progress of the spirit is already known to be mystical and difficult to understand. By proposing two paths you are only confusing the common man. So, please condescend to tell me which one is better in all respects, easier to adopt and will definitely lead to fruitfulness. One can even travel long distance without a problem when the vehicle is comfortable and trouble free. So, please tell me which one of the two paths is easier to follow.

The Lord was pleased on hearing the words of Arjuna and His heart was filled with gladness. He assured Arjuna that He will explain all that was asked for. Who is more fortunate than Arjuna that The Lord Himself, who is the knower of all knowledge, assures him that He will answer all the querries asked by him ?

संन्यासः कर्मयोगश्च निःश्रेयस्करावुभौ ।
तयोस्तु कर्मसंन्यासात् कर्मयोगो विशिष्यते ॥२॥

The Lord said - Renunciation of action and action without attachment both lead to the supreme goal. However, of the two, Action without attachment is superior to renunciation of action.

Saint Dnyaneshwar explains -

Shri Krishna replied - As a matter of fact, both the paths lead to Liberation and Realisation. However, just as a boat is easier to cross the stream for women and children, in a similar way, the path of action without attachment is an easier way to cross the ocean of worldly life for the knowledgeable as well as the ignorant. Weighing the two from all angles of thought, the path of action without attachment is easier to follow and ultimately resulting in the same goal as by the path of renunciation of action.

I will also explain to you the characteristics of renunciation of action, so that you will understand that in the ultimate result, both the paths are same.

ज्ञेयः स नित्यसंन्यासी यो न द्वेष्टि न काङ्क्षति ।
निर्द्वंद्वो हि महाबाहो सुखं बंधा त्प्रमुच्यते ॥३॥

Consider him as a true renunciate (Sanyasi) who neither dislikes nor desires anything. Oh brave Arjuna, freedom from duality easily leads to liberation from bondage.

Saint Dnyaneshwar explains -

One who never recalls to mind something which is already lost, nor desires for something he didn't get and thus attains a state of unwavering equanimity, is to be considered a true renunciate, who remains for ever in the state of renunciation. The ego of 'I', nor the fondness of mine ever affects him. That man whom all desires have left and who has no feeling of belonging with anything or anywhere in the world, gets a continuity of happiness called Bliss. If such a man lives in a house, simple or palatial, he may continue to do so, for in his mind, he has no belongings in this world, nor the house. Though cotton can burn away in a fire in a few seconds, after the fire is extinguished its ash can be safely stored in a fold of the cotton. Similarly, his ego and 'mine' feeling, like the existinguished fire, can remain in ash form in his body and mind. They do not affect his behaviour in this world. Such a man's actions do not put him in bondage. Then he becomes a real sanyasi, a true renunciate. Thus renunciation of action and action without attachment are the same.

सांख्ययोगौ पृथक् बालाः प्रवदन्ति न पण्डिताः ।
एकमप्यास्थितः सम्यगुभयोर्विन्दते फलम् ॥४॥

The common ignorant men consider renunciation of action and action without attachment as different.

The wise do not do so. A person who masters any one of them, gets the benefits of both.

Saint Dnyaneshwar explains -

Oh Partha, it is the ignorance that makes people think that they are different systems and different in effect on the individual. Just as we have different lamps which give the same light, likewise, a man establised in Parabrahma, perceives both renunciation of action and action without attachment as same. One may follow whichever path which appears easier to him, the fruit in the form of perennial bliss is the same.

यत्सांख्यैः प्राप्यते स्थानं तद्योगैरपि गम्यते ।
एकं सांख्यं च योगं च यःपश्यति स पश्यति ॥५॥

Whatever goal is reached by a person who renounces action, the same is reached in due course by one who follows Karmyoga that is action without attachment. One who sees both paths as same is one who sees the reality.

Saint Dnyaneshwar explains -

Whatever state is reached by one who renounces action through knowledge, the same is reached by one who practises action without attachment. Thus, ultimately both are one and the same thing. Just as sky and empty space mean the same thing, in a similar way, one who sees no difference between, Dnyanyoga i.e. renunciation of action and Karma-yoga is action without attachment, has seen the reality and has attained self-realisation and seen the Universal Self.

संन्यास्तु महाबाहो दुःखमाप्तुंमयोगतः ।
योगयुक्तो मुनिर्ब्रह्म न चिरेणाधिगच्छति ॥६॥

But, Arjuna, to attain renunciation of action i.e.

Sanyas without combining it with Karmayoga i.e action without attachment is painful and difficult. A spiritual aspirant who follows Karmayoga attains Brahma very quickly.

Saint Dnyaneshwar explains -

A man who is engaged in normal worldly action can gradually learn to do the same without attachment and thus get used to practise Karmayoga. For the same man, to renounce action straightaway is difficult and painful as attachment lingers despite firmness, though his urge to attain knowledge is unquestionable, but it takes longer time to do so. The path of Karmayoga is like climbing to the mountain top along a gentle slope while that through renunciation and dnyanyoga is like climbing up a steep precifice.

योगयुक्तो विशुद्धात्मा विजितात्मा जितेंद्रियः ।
सर्वभूतात्मभूतात्मा कुर्वन्नपि न लिप्यते ॥७॥

A Karmayogi whose mind is purified, who has obtained control over both his mind and senses and who sees his self as pervading all the beings (in the world) is not ensnared in bondage of action though engaged in various activities.

Saint Dnyaneshwar explains -

When one holds a small quantity of salt in his hand, it is separate and small as long as he doesn't put it in sea. Once put in the sea, it spreads all over the sea and cannot be seen separately. One who has removed his mind from the misconceptions about the world and placed it on the path of spiritual progress, it becomes purified and ready to reach the spiritual goals. He gets control over his mind and overpowers the cravings and desires. Then he is able to see himself in all beings, though separate in bodily identity. The ego and the belonging is dispelled and he becomes one with the universe. Then, whatever activities he gets engaged in the world, cannot create any bondage and he remains liberated forever. His activities are as if not done at all.

नैव किंचित्करोमीति युक्तोमन्येत तत्वविद् ।
पश्यन् शृण्वन् स्पृशन् जिघ्रन् अश्नन् गच्छन् स्वपन् श्वसन् ॥८॥
प्रलपन् विसृजन् गृह्णन् उन्मिषन् निमिषन् अपि ।
इंद्रियाणि इंद्रियार्थेषु वर्तन्त इति धारयन् ॥९॥

The Sanyasi who has realised the Self thinks "I do nothing at all". In seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, walking, sleeping breathing and (8) speaking, giving, taking, opening and closing the eyes, he believes only the senses are operating upon their sense objects (9)

Saint Dnyaneshwar explains -

Oh Parth, when a man's Self does not reside in the body, how can there be the feeling of the doer of action in the body ? How can there be the ego and attachment in the body ? In this way, without casting off the body, the man who is well-versed in yoga attains the manifestations of characteristics of Brahman. Outwardly he is like any other man with a body and carrying out all the routine activities. He sees with his eyes, hears with his ears, but his emotions remain unaffected and his equanimity does not forsake him. He feels by his touch, smells with his nose, talks when it suits, eats his food when its time to do so, sleeps well when its night, walks when required and carries out all his duties that are needed to be done. What else to say ? He breathes, opens and shuts his eyes to see the outside world. But he does not consider himself as the doer of all these things. The senses do their work in the usual natural worldly manner. But his ego & his Self are not involved in them. Once he was asleep and dreamt with the misconceptions of the world. Now, he is awake with the true knowledge of the Brahman. That's why he is not the doer of the actions of the senses. He is aloof from them.

ब्रह्मण्याधाय कर्माणि संगं त्यक्त्वा करोतियः ।
लिप्यते न स पापेन पद्मपत्रमिवाम्भसा ॥१०॥

When one carries out his actions as an offering to Brahman, detaching himself from any of them, he is unattached by any sin resulting therefrom, like a lotus leaf untouched by water.

Saint Dnyaneshwar explains -

For a man who has attained knowledge, the senses act in their natural, usual manner, devoid of his Self. The lamp provides light for all the actions going on in the house, but lamp itself is aloof from the actions. Likewise are the actions of the man in this world. The leaves of the lotus grow in water but do not become wet with the water. Likewise the actions cannot create any sort of bondage for the man who has attained knowledge.

कायेन मनसा बुद्ध्या केवलैरिंद्रियैरपि ।
योगिनः कर्म कुर्वन्ति संगं त्यक्त्वाऽऽत्मशुद्धये ॥११॥

Karma-yogis engage themselves in activities, without attachment, through their body, mind, intellect and senses only for self-purification.

Saint Dnyaneshwar explains -

Those activities of the body that do not show signs of reasoning by the intellect nor thoughtfulness of the mind are merely those of the body only with the help of the senses. Children's simple actions involve only their body and senses. In a similar way, yogis act only for the sake of the body, appropriate with the external circumstances. When a man is asleep, only the mind can be awake. The desire and cravings are spread over so wide a field that they force the body to go through the activities involved, without getting aware of them. When the activities do not involve even the senses, they can be called imaginations of the mind. Yogis even participate in such activities. But they do not suffer from the bondage of any of the activities. Because, they have already left behind the ego of the Self.

When a man's mind is seriously engaged in same thoughts, he still responds mechanically if somebody gives him a call, he even talks with him, but he is not aware of these actions. Such unmindful actions can be said to be those of the senses. On the other hand, those actions which well thought by the mind are said to be those of the intellect. Yogis however mindfully allow their intellect to engage in activities of the world. But they are beyond effects of bondage of the actions, having removed all worldliness from their Self and having stabilised themselves in Brahman. As they are beyond their ego from the body and also the intellect, their equanimity remains, for ever, undisturbed and their existence is purity personified. Activity done this way without the ego of the Self is inactivity itself. Whatever we have talked now is in fact beyond the capacity of the words to explain. The meaning is therefore full to the brain and overflowing the glass that contains knowledge. Only those whose senses are purified by inaction have the capability to listen and understand the true meaning of this conversation. That highest part of the knowledge which is difficult to be understood by the intellect and perceived by the mind is explained here due to the blessings of the Lord and undisturbed concentrated attention of the listeners. Shrikrishna said to Arjuna, now I will tell you the true characteristics of one who has stabilised himself in Brahman. Listen attentively.

युक्तः कर्मफलं त्यक्त्वा शांतिमाप्नोति नैष्ठिकीम् ।
अयुक्तः कामकारेण फले सक्तो निबध्यते ॥१२॥

A Karma-yogi attains Supreme Bliss by abandoning fruits of action. Those who are attached to fruits of action are lured into bondage.

Saint Dnyaneshwar explains -

A person who is full to the brim with knowledge of the Self and who is repulsed by the fruit of action, attains the Supreme Bliss without any effort. On the other hand, Oh Arjuna, one who aspires after the fruit of action enters the mire of bondage deeper and deeper, and becomes helpless and unable to extract himself.

सर्वकर्माणि मनसा संन्यस्यास्ते सुखं वशी ।
नवद्वारे पुरे देही नैव कुर्वन्न कारयन् ॥१३॥

A person who has tamed his senses and has mentally renounced the fruit of all actions, dwells happily in this city of nine gates (the gross body) neither performing nor becoming the cause of any action. (13)

Saint Dnyaneshwar explains -

A man who acts as dutifully as one who craves for the fruit of the action, but with the firm understanding that he is not the doer of the action, is in a very high state of equanimity and sees happiness wherever he looks and his perception understands the presence of

Brahman everywhere. He resides happily in the gross body, which is compared to a city of nine gates, and remains active but at the same time does not perform any action.

न कर्तृत्वं न कर्माणि लोकस्य सृजति प्रभुः ।
न कर्मफलसंयोगं स्वभावस्तु प्रवर्तते ॥१४॥

The Lord creates neither the urge for action, nor the products of actions, nor the attachment to the results of action amongst the people. All these happenings are due to nature alone (through the action of Maya, the ignorance). (14)

Saint Dnyaneshwar explains -

The Lord is not the doer of anything in this world, but due to Maya, He appears responsible for all actions in the whole of the universe. Even if we call Him the doer, He does not suffer bondage of any action, neither any action can cling to Him. He is always in slumber called Yoga-nidra, the active sleep. He is a non-doer, but builds the whole universe from the basic elements. He resides in everything, in all animals, plants and inanimate things, but at the same time He is unattached to anything. He is neither the cause of creation of the world nor of destruction the same. Everything follows the cosmic laws of nature.

नाऽऽदत्ते कस्यचित्पापं न चैव सुकृतं विभुः ।
अज्ञानेनाऽवृत्तं ज्ञानं तैन मुह्यन्ति जन्तवः ॥१५॥

The Lord, the Universal Self, does not take the responsibility for either the evil deeds or the meritorious deeds of anybody. The ignorance which covers the true knowledge deludes the people. (15)

Saint Dnyaneshwar explains -

He knows the good and the evil in the world, but He neither looks at them nor become a witness to them. He appears in gross bodies as a manifestation and participates in the play of actions, but His unmanifested Supreme Being does not get affected by the temporal play of action. Oh Arjuna, though people say that He is the creator, the protector and the destroyer of the universe, understand that they say so because of ignorance.

ज्ञानेन तु तदज्ञानं येषां नाशितमात्मनः ।
तेषामादित्यवत् ज्ञानं प्रकाशयति तत्परम् ॥१६॥

Those in whom the ignorance is removed by the knowledge of the Self, get the enlightenment like the sun removing the darkness and making the whole world visible instantly. (16)

Saint Dnyaneshwar explains -

When the ignorance is removed completely, the darkness of delusion disappears and the non-doership of the Supreme Being becomes clear instantly. With this, the non-doership of the individual Self is also perceived in the inner being, as understood by the sages through oneness of all beings with Universal Supreme Self. When the discriminative intellect thus illumines the mind, the differentiating diversity in the world disappears as if the whole world stands liberated all at once, like the sun, though rises in the east, it spreads its light in all directions, removing the darkness everywhere.

(To be continued)

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The Humility of Spiritual Leaders

Unparallel in the history of mankind is humility demonstrated by spiritual leaders towards their followers as exemplified by Lord Krishna who became a charioteer to Arjuna at the time of great battle of Mahabharata, the Saint Jnaneshwara who confessed that his role in carrying the divine message was that of a servant, and Sadhubua(1) (1829-1879) who used to admire and touch the feet of a young Sri Bhausaheb Maharaj Umadikar (1843-1914) on his devotion to Maruti. However, this paper is devoted to give a description of how during their last days the three great spiritual teachers Viz: Jesus Christ, Swami Vivekananda (18th January 1863 - 4th July 1902), and Gurudeo Ranade (3rd July 1886 - 6th June 1957) with utmost humility treated their disciples.

A. Jesus Christ And His Apostles :

Jesus Christ is the founder of Christianity and is also considered its source, since the Christian religion is based on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. Jesus was the son of Mary and Joseph, and was born in Bethlehem...... In his early 30's, he received his divine calling and was baptised by John the Baptist to begin his mission (Sharma 1999:76). Jesus chose twelve Apostles (Greek "apostolos", one who is sent) to preach his Gospel to the people of Israel (Sharma 1999:19). The Gospel was that the Kingdom of God was at hand.

Jesus had his last supper in Jerusalem with his twelve Apostles - Andrew, John, Bartholomew, Judas,⁽²⁾ Jude, the two Jameses, Matthew, Peter, Philip, Simon and Thomas (The Wordsworth Encyclopaedia of World religions 1999:95). During the supper Jesus washed the feet of his followers and kissed their feet. He told them, "I am among you as he that serveth" (St. Luke 22-27). He gave them the lesson in humility.

B. Swami Vivekananda and Sister Nivedita :

The historical speech delivered by Swami Vivekananda at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago on 11th September 1893, won him the hearts of the millions all over the world. Of them the Irish born Margaret Elizabeth Noble (28th October 1867 - 13th October, 1911) was the most memorable person.

Margaret was fully convinced of the true greatness of Swami Vivekananda. She was also attracted by Swami Vivekananda's call of service. One day turning to Margaret Swami Vivekananda said; "I have plans for the women of my country, in which you, I think, could be of great help to me." It was the most welcome call to Margaret and she made up her mind to go to India. She arrived at Kolkata (Calcutta) port on 24th January 1898 and there Swami Vivekananda welcomed her. Margaret vowed herself to the service of people of India. On 25th March 1898, Swami Vivekananda accepted her as his disciple and named her as Nivedita, meaning 'the dedicated one'.

Sister Nivedita travelled widely in India and abroad, and closely studied Hindu Scriptures, wrote sixteen books, lectured and served the people of India in multifarious ways.

A strange and heart-stirring incidence took place in the life of sister Nivedita in the year 1902. It is as follows.

On Wednesday, the 2nd July, 1902 Sister Nivedita went to Belur Muth to see Swami Vivekananda. Swami Vivekananda observed fasting on that day as it was *Ekādasi* (a fasting day). But Swami Vivekananda called her near and made the arrangement for her sitting and served her meals. After her meals was over Swami Vivekananda poured water on her hand to wash and wiped her hands gently with the napkin. This kind of his behaviour looked absurd and strange to her and she kindly sought an explanation for it. Swami Vivekananda replied : "Didn't Jesus wash the feet of his disciples"? Nivedita was about to tell him that Jesus did it only on his last day but she swallowed the words. And yet alas! It turned out to be true even in the case of Swami Vivekananda.

Swami Vivekananda showered on Sister Nivedita his immeasurable love. Sister Nivedita went her home joyfully. On Friday Swami Vivekananda wrote a letter to her intimating that he was all right. But the very next day morning the news of the sad demise of Swami Vivekananda came to her as a thunderbolt (*vide* for details Somananthananda 1993:22).

C. Gurudeo Ranade and his disciples :

Devar Nimbargi is a remote village in Bijapur district where Shri Nimbargi Maharaj (*Param Guru* of Sri Gurudeo Ranade) lived and breathed his last. Gurudeo Ranade's last visit to Devar Nimbargi with some of his disciples was on Sunday, the 13th January, 1957. After the camphor was lit on that day before the sacred Samadhi (a tomb raised on the mortal remains of a saint) of Sri Nimbargi Maharaj, Gurudeo came out and directed Sri D. R. Pathak of Kolhapur to take a photo. All those who were in the temple hurriedly assembled round him, some sat down where they found a place and a few remained standing - all eager to have themselves photographed along with Gurudeo. The photo was taken by Sri Pathak and this was probably Gurudeo's last photo during his life time and Gurudeo himself liked the photo very much for some important reasons.

The photo is eloquent. Gurudeo is standing under an arch in the Samadhi temple of his *Param Guru* (the Spiritual teacher of a spiritual teacher) with his vision fixed on the infinite. One of the most striking features of the photo is that Gurudeo is standing while most of his disciples like Dr. Christian of Aurangabad, Sri Gangadhar Rao Deshpande - the freedom fighter, Sri Jagannath Lele - who served Gurudeo day and night are sitting. Gurudeo observed that he was there to serve the disciples and that should be the attitude of the spiritual aspirants (*vide* for details Kulkarni 1997 : 160-61, Sangoram 1964:138). A few months later i.e., on 6.6.1957 Gurudeo departed from the world.

Notes :

1. Sadhubua is a disciple of Sri Nimbargi Maharaj. At the instance of Sri Nimbargi Maharaj Sadhubua initiated Sri Bhausaheb Maharaj Umadikar.

2. Judas Iscariot, betrayed his spiritual master to the religious leaders for 30 pieces of Silver. Judas identified Jesus to the Roman soldiers at Gethscmane by a kiss of greeting and Roman soldiers found and

arrested him. On a Friday around the year A.D. 29, Jesus was executed on a cross between two thieves. Judas later repented and hanged himself (died Circa A.D. 30) (vide for details Breuilly, Palmer 1993:13, and the Wordsworth Encyclopaedia of World religions 1999:600).

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Prayer for the New Year

Sweet blow the winds,
Sweet flow the rivers,
May the herbs be sweet to us.
May the dust of the Earth yield us happiness.
May Heaven, our Father, send us happiness.
May the trees gladden us with fruit.
May the Sun bestow joy on us.
May every direction bring us happiness.

- From Rigved

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Religion, Science and Indian Culture

Science is generally looked upon as the antithesis of the kind of speculation which flourishes in religion. There can, prima facie, be little chance of religious speculation or inspiration serving as a kind of 'id' for the latter. The researches of Arthur Koestler have, however, yielded some surprising conclusions in this respect by showing the extent to which religious imagination, inspiration, motivation and speculation have provided the motive-force for the scientific breakthroughs in the Western world.[1] Can the Indian religious tradition not serve a similar end ?

II

Cosmological speculation would be a case in point Edward Conze writes :

"Before the Copernican revolution and the invention of the telescope the European mind was confined into a universe but tiny in its dimensions. Galileo, when he became blind in 1638, wrote to his friend Diodati : "Alas, your dear friend and servant Galileo has been for the last month hopelessly blind; so that this heaven, this earth, this universe, which I by marvellous discoveries and clear demonstrations had enlarged a hundred thousand times beyond the belief of the wise men of bygone ages, hence-forward for me is shrunk into such small space as is filled by my own bodily sensations". Europeans in the 17th century were quite unaware that "the wise men of bygone ages" in India had for a long time already done justice to the immensity of time and space, not, however, through marvellous discoveries and clear demonstrations, but through the intuitions of their cosmic imagination".[2]

Edward Conze point out that in the "views on the structure and evolution of the universe" which "the Buddhists were... content to borrow from the traditions of contemporary Hinduism",[3] a concept of *kalpa* or world-system prevailed, which "completes its evolution from its initial condensation to the final conflagration." He goes on to say :

"One world system follows the other, without beginning and end, quite interminably. A World System is a conglomeration of many suns, moons, etc.

Innumerable world systems reach out into space, immeasurably far. In a way, modern astronomy has an analogous idea when it speaks of 'island universes', billions of which are already known, many of them billions of light years away. Each such 'spiral nebula' consists of thousands of millions of stars rotating around a common centre. Their shape is often that of a mill-wheel, just as the Buddhists had asserted. The earth forms part of the 'Galactic system', which would correspond to what the Buddhists called "This Saha-world".

In regard to the size of the universe, Buddhist views are borne out by recent discoveries, and their vast cosmic perspective cannot fail to be salutary to spiritual growth. *It would, however, be idle to pretend that the detailed description which the Buddhist scriptures give* *of the constitution and composition of a world system can be harmonised with the conclusions of modern science.* Almost all the traditional assertions must appear fabulous to us. We hear, in particular, a great deal about the 'heavens' and 'hells' attached to each world system, and the account of the earth's geography is quite at variance with the picture presented by a modern atlas. Buddhists assume, by the way, as a matter of course, that life is not confined to his earth, that living beings dwell in many of the stars, and the later Buddhism of the Mahayana laid great stress on the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas who worked to release suffering beings in world systems other than our own".[4]

It should be noted that it is not in the convergence of conclusion between religion and science in which we are interested here so much as in the fact that the former provides the fertilizing force for the latter, wherein it can be genetically located at times. Even in the field of convergence of Hindu-inspired Buddhist cosmology and modern science the difference may have been overstated by Conze. For as Huston Smith remarks :

"Why should the West, dominated to the extent it currently is by scientific modes of thought, go to school to a perspective forged before the rise of modern science? Some think the answer lies in the extent to which the Buddhist cosmology anticipated what contemporary science has empirically discovered. The parallels are impressive. Astronomical time and space, which irrevocable smashed the West's previous world view, slip into the folds of Buddhist cosmology without a ripple. If we turn from macrocosm to microcosm, from the infinite to the infinitesimal, we find the same uncanny prescience. While the Greeks were positing atoms that were eternal because not composite (*a-tomas* - indivisible, that which cannot be cut), Buddhists were teaching that everything corporeal is impermanent *(anicca)* because constituted of dharmas as minuscule in duration as they are in space - remarkably like the fleeting blips that particles register on the scientists' oscilloscopes.

To return for a moment to the macrocosm, it is not just the dimensions of the scientific cosmology that Buddhism previsioned, but its form as well. We have become familiar with the debate between George Gamow's "big bang" and Fred Hoyle's "steady state" cosmogonies, the first arguing that the universe is the continuing consequence of the explosion of a single primeval atom; the second, that the universe has always been in the state in which we know it, fresh hydrogen being continuously created to replace that which is being emptied out through the stars' recession once they exceed the speed of light. The latest word from Mount Palomar is that both these theories appear to be wrong. The red shifts on the spectrographic reports from distant galaxies suggest they are slowing down. The hypothesis this evokes is that after expanding for a while the universe contracts. Only to repeat the cycle indefinitely. As the Harvard astronomer Harlow Shapley puts the matter, instead of the "big bang" or the "steady state" theories, we has the "bang... bang... bang" theory. "Very interesting", says the Buddhist, this being what his cosmology has taught him all along".[5]

III

By *assuming* a conflict between science and religion of the basis of Western Christian experience we tend to ignore the historical fact of the extent to which religion provided the psychic matrix for the birth of modern science and the potential fact of the extent to which the speculative pleroma of Hinduism can be harnessed in the service of science.[6] It should not be forgotten that the Gupta Age in which the Puranas underwent a process of redaction was also scientifically one of the most promising in ancient India.

Endnotes :

1. Arthur Koestler, *The Act of Creation* (New York : Dell Publishing Co., 1964) Part II. This position should be distinguished from the one which emphasizes the convergence between science and religion as distinguished from the emergence of science from religion. Works representative of the convergence thesis would include Raynor C. Johnson, *The Imprisoned Splendour* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1953); R.G.H. Sin, *The Tao of Science* (M.I.T. Press, 1957); Lawrence Le Shan, *The Medium, the Mystic and the Physicist* (New York : Viking Press, 1974); Fritjof Capra, *The Tao of Physics* (Berkeley : Shambhala, 1975); etc.
2. Edward Conze, *Buddhism : Its Essence and Development* (New York : Harper & Row, 1959) p.49.
3. *Ibid.*, pp.48-49, also see A. L. Basham *The Wonder That Was India* (New York : Taplinger Publishing Company, 1968) p.274.
4. Edward Conze, *op. cit.*, p.50, emphasis added.
5. See Philip Kaplau, *The Three Pillars of Zen* (Boston : Beacon Press, 1965) p.xii.
6. "Impressive as the experimental foundations of modern science may seem to some, it is nevertheless rather curious that Einstein and Freud, the two most influential Jewish scientists of the last generation, should have derived their leading ideas from a system as blatantly 'unscientific' and fantastic as the Kabbala. This fact is hard to explain on the presuppositions of empiricism. Not to mention Einstein's earlier teachings about light, 'shortly before his death', 'he formulated the quintessence' of his world-view in these words : 'Space has devoured ether and time; it seems to be on the point of swallowing up also the field and corpuscles, so that it alone remains as the vehicle of reality'. (R. Thiel, *And There Was Light*, 1958, p.345)", quoted in Edward Conze, *Buddhist Thought in India* (London : George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1962) p.165.

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Moksa and *Brahman* in Orphic Religion

The shortest possible translation that can be given to *moksa* is salvation. Salvation of the soul from the bondage of the body is sought after by the initiates of mystery cults. The concept of *moksa* fused into Greek religion as a result of the Hindu mystic tradition which took place when India and Greece came into closer political and cultural contacts around the 6th century B.C. The origin of the Hindu mystic tradition stretches into time immemorial. It teaches that *Brahman* is the impersonal absolute, the pure being and of course Saccidananda. The one who becomes one with Brahman attains moksa. Orpheus, a famous religious teacher of Thrace introduced his mystic doctrines to the Greeks in the second half of the 7th century B.C. It is interesting to note that they coincide with the Hindu concept of the *moksa* and *Brahman.*

The immortality of the soul and it need to liberate itself from the corporeal is common to both Hindu and Orphic doctrines. Orpheus prescribed a series of purificatory and expiatory rite such as abstinence from animal flesh and beans and the use of wool, avoidance of blood sacrifice and of course the scared rites connected to death, the teletae. The accquaintence with the teletae was compulsory for the Orphic initiate in order to purify his soul and to be transformed into a new being. This requires *abhyasa* (practice) and *ekagrata* (concentration) as in Hindu teachings. The regular observation of these rites and the completion of the wheel of rebirth or the law of karma brings the pure purified soul to its former dwelling place.

The Rg Veda notes the same journey of the purified soul back to heaven (x.14.8).

The Orphic initiate seeks to become one with Aither, the impersonal absolute comparable to *Brahman* and a state similar to the highest Buddhist spiritual attainment, *nibbana.* This is a state similar to that when an oil lamp is extinguished, The Brhadaranyaka Upanishad notes the union with *Brahman* to the falling of a lump of salt into water (iv.4.23). The purified soul of the Orphic initiate is exulted as a kid falling into a stream of milk, In this state both Hindu and Orphis mystics achieve *moksa.* The Hindu mystics has surpassed the law of karma and achieved knowledge of *paravidya,* the highest wisdom as against *avidya,* ignorance and *maya,* illusion. The Brhadaranyaka Upanishad also notes this absolute state as : "Whoever knows I am Brahman becomes all things". (iv.4.23). This is the state of *jivanmukthi,* release from the cycle of sansaric existence. In striking comparison the Orphic mystics cries out : "I have flown out of the sorrowful weary wheel" and finally "God am I no longer". Union with God is definitely unGreek but yet it is the essence of Orphic religion.

The influence of the Hindu mystic tradition is very vivid in Orphism particularly the concept of *moksa* and *Brahman* which coincide with the Orphic teachings of the soul and union with Aither.

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If people were to open their eyes a little and look at Nature, they would soon find themselves convinced about God's existence. Do they not see Omnipotence everywhere? And must it not convince them about God's existence? That the sky can envelop everything, or the wind move ceaselessly on, or that the fire should burn, or that the rain should quench the ground; that the mountains should not move from their places; that the ocean must not overreach its bounds; that the earth must bear the burden of all creatures, that are on its surface; is not all this due to His order?

(Gurudeo in Mysticism in Maharashtra P.62)

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What a man doesn't understand, he doesn't have.

- Goethe

The Ocean of Eternal Peace !

Breathing the air of purity,
Drinking the water of purity,
And Living the very existence of pristine purity,
Would alone lead to the lone Truth of Eternity.

If there be such truth of Universal recognition,
It is the "Divine Spirit" abiding in every creation,
Which is omnipotent, Omnipresent and Omnicient,
That controls the activities of the entire Universe.

Lo ! There is an ocean of absolute Divinity,
Of Eternal Bliss, Peace and Prosperity,
Where the rivers of all religions take a dive,
Losing their own identity of their distinct variety.

The Divine Ocean of Eternal Peace is one,
Where the roars of ocean are never heard,
And where the waves of conflicting thoughts
would never arise,
Reflecting the vision of the Almighty to the
entire humanity !

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(Continued from last issue)

Eternity Compressed in Time :

My Reminiscences of Shri Gurudeo

Coming to the last incentive to spiritual life as discussed in the Pada Literature of Hindi saints, Shri Gurudeva tells us that man develops an "attitude of helplessness" when he comes across situation in his life which are beyond his control. Man feels that some inscrutable Power "guides the destinies of the world". Shri Gurudeva says that this inscrutability might be interpreted in four different forms. Firstly, "it might concern itself with the 'indeterminateness' of the Power as such, and "its consequent unpredictability and incalculability." This would be a reasonably scientific attitude. But secondly, it may also assume the metaphysical shape of a belief in fatalism, and may result in an unpurposive view of the universe." Thirdly, it might take the shape of "a belief in a world-order" with which man must reconcile himself. For instance, the Stoics call that order as Nature and say, "All that is good to you Oh Nature, is also good to me." Fourthly, it might take the form of "resignation or humility or submission to the will of God" by a believer in the existence of omnipotent and omniscient God who is regarded as the protector of His devotees.

As an example of the belief in fatalism, Shri Gurudeva cites the famous song of Kabir, "करम गति टारै नाहिं टरी", whatever has been ordained by Fate cannot be undone. Kabir points out that the great sage Vasishtha, with all his knowledge of the heavenly bodies could not find out suitable stellar conjunction for the coronation of Rāma. In fact, "king Dashsratha died before the coronation took place, Rāma was banished to the forest by his stepmother, and Sitā was later kidnapped by the Demon King." (Pathway to God in Hindi Literature, p.69-70). Shri Gurudeva also mentions Kabir's second illustration according to which the king Nriga had ultimately to be born as ever-nodding lizard, despite having given crores of cows in charity. The king's fault was that he nodded his head to give a negative answer to the question whether a particular cow he was offering in charity was not the same as he had already given away. Thus Kabir comes to the conclusion that the course of events in history is beyond any astronomical or scientific calculations. Some inscrutable Fate seems to determine them. In this context Shri Gurudeva recalls how inspite of his great and continuous conquests through a number of years after the Second World War broke out, Hitler had to shoot himself and his mistress when he was finally cornered in Berlin from all sides. This shows that he laughs best who laughs last. Even a chain of successive victories might ultimately result in disastrous defeat. Such is the invincible power of Fate.

So Kabir seems to uphold fatalism when he concludes the above song with the utterance, "होनी होके रही", whatever was ordained by Fate did happen even in the face of best human efforts.

Shri Gurudeva then refers to the illustration which has been given by Surdas in his song, "दयानिधि तेरी गति लखि न परै", O merciful Lord I fail to understand the mystery of certain actions of yours which show that you often reconcile yourself with apparently wrong course of events. Prahlada's disobedience to his father was morally wrong, so the latter confined him to the prison. But God was obliged to take on the form of a man-lion (नृसिंह) and kill his father in order to release him from bondage. Shri Gurudeva remarks that God being super-moral, he could afford not to obey the dictates of morality. However, this does involve certain incalculability in the achievement of a particular end by God.

In order to strengthen his conception of the invincibility of Fate, Kabir mentions the trials and tribulations undergone by the Pāṇdavas inspite of their friendship with Lord Krishṇa, "पाण्डव जाके आप सारथी तिन पर विपत्ति परी". As Shri Gurudeva tells us, the Pāṇdavas were subjected to critical situations through which only Lord Krishna's "transcendental power could lift them. When Bhishma was almost on the point of vanquishing the Pāṇdavas, Krishna had to bring in Shikhaṇdi to kill the renowned warrior. When Karṇa was about to throw the deadliest of atom-bomb of ancient times (Shakti) on Arjuna, Lord Krishna had to take resort to get the chariot of Karṇa stuck up in the earth in order that Arjuna might be free to discharge his killing arrow at his invincible enemy. (Ibid.p.72).

Shri Gurudeva compares the attitudes of Kabir and Surdas in respect of the incalculability of the unseen Power that determines the human destiny. While Kabir adopts the attitude of a fatalist in the song referred to above in his utterance "होनी होके रही", Surdas becomes more submissive to the will of God, so that "God might relieve him from a whirlpool of disasters". Surdas prays: "सूरदास बलि जात-वरन की कैसे सूर तरै". Shri Gurudeva remarks, "resignation or submission to the will of God would be a more potent instrument of achieving the end than either belief in an unseen Power or a philosophic reconciliation with a world-order. Who, ever, in the course of history has emerged successful except through an alliance with God?" (Ibid. p.74-5).

In this context of the discussion of incentives to spiritual life in the Hindi Pada literature, it will be rewarding to mention that Shri Gurudeva takes note of a novel incentive found in the Dohā literature. Shri Gurudeva while contrasting the Padas from the Dohas, tells us that "the Padas constitute the macrocosm of spiritual experience", but the Dohas constitute "the microcosm". He states that the Doha literature contains 'Epigrammatic Mysticism'. The Dohas are unique in the sense that they are a "peculiar combination of epigram, wit, humour, sarcasm, love, devotion, service and general advice to humanity", the like of which is hard to find in other provincial literatures of our country. The Abhangas in Marāthi and the Vachanas in Kannaḍa literatures alone come to the high level of the Dohās in so far as the expression of spiritual experience goes. (Ibid. p.304-5).

Shri Gurudeva regards poet Rahīm's Doha "सदा नगारा कूच का बाजत आठों जाम । रहिमन या जग आय के को करि सका मुकाम ॥", As giving a novel incentive to spiritual life viz., the consideration of "flux and perpetual change" manifest everywhere in this world and in human life. Rahīm tells us that God of Death "is pursuing humanity with his drum being constantly beaten." "Under these circumstances", asks Rahīm, "What solace can we have?" Taking resort to the maxim that nothing abides in this world, and all things are always changing, our only approach to Reality would be a contemplation on the nature of flux or death." Shri Gurudeva illustrates this advice of Rahim by taking a few instances. (1) The advice of Rahim is exactly on the lines of the great Stoic philosophers. The Stoic philosophers were never afraid of death. On the other hand, they made death the platform of their contemplation of Reality. They regarded philosophy as "merely contemplation on death". (2) The story of Democles, the jester of Dionysius who was the tyrant of Syracuse, teaches us the same lesson. Inspite of regal happiness which the king was enjoying, we are told, a sword was continuously hanging over his head at a banquet, suspended by a single hair, which might mean death any moment, and an end to all regal pomp. (3) The great Satyavrata of mythological fame likewise attained spiritual realisation by "contemplation on death". (4) A great Kannada saint has also said that the cemetery should be the proper place for our meditation, where a constant presence of bones and ashes of the dead are powerful reminders of death, leading us to contemplation on God. (5) Finally, Kāshī, the great centre of spiritual pilgrimage in our country, is a place where God Shankar lived in a cemetery, and where he enjoyed supreme bliss, and became a source of bliss to all those who offered their prayers to Him at that great spiritual centre.

(To be continued)

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In Divine or Spiritual Communism, each man gives according to his ability and takes according to his needs. Here, there is an eternal struggle for the love of God. Every man has to gain it for himself. The experience has to come from within. A real welfare state is the company of saints.

- (Gurudeo's Talks)

Non-Violence - Some Reflections

The word non-violence has no place in major Encyclopedia on Philosophy. Yes, the word 'Ahimsa' may be mentioned in some Hindu Encyclopedia. This is a suggestion enough that the idea and therefore the word, is totally of an Indian origin. We can proudly proclaim it to be our trademark. The torch-bearers of this wholesome concept were conspicuously the great thinkers of Jainism[1] and of course, our very own Mahatma Gandhi.[2] He practically worked it out to a successful end, and we all know the tales of woe and strife that go along with it. When he was victimized by injustice in South Africa, he faced the greatest challenge of his life. Injustice can be faced in two ways, says the tradition, one you either continue being victim, and second you fight back with violence. Now Gandhiji's ethical stature would never opt for the passive submission to injustice. He firmly believed that injustice corrupts the soul, both of the victim and the one who is unjust. Hence it would be doubly wrong then, to do nothing. Again to reciprocate violence by further violence is no solution either, because violence begets violence. The original perpetrator of injustice may then feel victimized and also justified in responding with violence.

The major world events are ultimately based on such a concept of retaliation, which they may call wild justice, tit-for-tat, an eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth, and so on. Violence is thus glorified as a great equalizer.

However, Gandhiji sought for a third way. His response was wholesome --- a combination of three basic human values. As a matter of fact, he was convinced that politics cannot be separated from spiritual values. The three basic human values truth, non-violence and self-suffering combined in a response called 'Satyagraha'. The fundamental issue at stake was to bring an end to injustice by changing the heart of the wrong doer --- a feat which only he could achieve. It was only love and self-suffering which could awaken the sense of justice in the opponent. We can discern an ideal pattern in his practice of Satyagraha or non-violence. He experimented with it both, in South Africa and in India. The first step is always a careful sorting out of facts, which then led to negotiation and possibly to arbitration. If the truth is to prevail, then one should stay open to communication. If two groups are in conflict, then each side has only a partial view of truth. Therefore, a critical perspective of the other side is needed to sort out the truth from untruth. If arbitration fails, then alone can one move for direct action, and try to solve the issue to mutual satisfaction. This is the agenda of Gandhian Fight. You can claim to have won only if your opponent can say the same. In Satyagraha Gandhiji has shown the world a new form of conflict resolution which can be applied to conflicts between nations, between people and its Government, between social groups, and even between individuals. We all will cry out that it is a hard, even impractical path to follow, but for Gandhiji, it is the only one which has a lasting value.

Non-violence had ceased to remain a mere concept or an idea in his life. India's Independence stands as a glorious and eternal example of the powers of his weapon, which was personified in the person of Mahatma Gandhi. History proclaims that Great Britain and India had the friendliest transfer of power from the ruler to the ruled in human history.

Philosophical system building in India is almost parallel with gaining of perfection, which has various names such as Mukti, Moksha, Nirvana and so on. For Jainas, it can be attained only through a strict life of penance and non-violence.[3]

The very word "Non-violence" is glaringly missing from major Encyclopedia of Philosophy : they do mention words like non-cognition, non-conformity, non-naturalism and even non-sense ! However, the word 'Ahimsa' does find a place in some Indian Encyclopedia.

Ahimsa literally means not to injure or harm. It is one of the prominent virtues of most Indian cults. Scholars are of the opinion that it may have originated as protest against blood-shed and animal sacrifices[4] and also against the capital punishment. Later, Buddhists and Jainas may have protested against war. But 'Ahimsa' could not be practiced by the Aryans who were in search of land; their ambitions led them to construct war-weapons for killing the opponent. Some Vedic warfares are quite savage and lack moral code of conduct. Harsh treatment was rendered to prisoners. This is referred to in Atharva Veda 3 (VIII, 8, 10)[5] which states that "they are to be bound and put to death." For the ladies of the defeated enemy the two alternatives were slavery or ignoble life of flesh-trade (Refer Rig Veda x 89,9)[6] But there is no conscious effort to form a standard moral theory. Research scholars on Indology tell us that such obvious evidence to moral consciousness is lacking, until the composition of Upanishads. In Chhadogya Upanishad* (6-17,4) there is shown an association of 'Ahmisa' with austerity, charity and truth and declares that non-injury and truth are inseparable. Thus, we can give the credit of the doctrine of 'Ahimsa' to this Upanishad. However, its staunch application can be found in the Buddhism and Jainism. An outstanding example of the application of 'Ahimsa' is found in King Ashoka.

According to Jaina's Āchārānga Sutra (1,2,3, 1-4) 'A wise man should know and consider the happiness of all the things, for nothing is inaccessible to death and all beings are fond of themselves..... They shun destruction and cling to life. To all things, life is dear.[7] (p.293).

This view is in confirmation with the modern scientific view. The famous biologist HIS Cambell states that all animals are pleasure seekers (Refer 'The pleasure area' prelude). In this book 'The History of Greek Religion (P 220) Nilson says that the 'orphics and the vegetarian Pythagorean abstained from killing animals'.

In the work of G. Buhler, a translation of The law of Manu, 'Ahimsa is said to be the means by which the faculty of remembering former existence may be attained (Manu IV 148-39)'

In Vaman Purana Ahimsa is personified as the wife of Brahma whose offsprings are Nara and Narayana who taught the way to spiritual enlightenment.

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* 6. Chhandogya Upaniṣada
अथ यत् तपो दानम् आर्जवम् अहिंसा ।
सत्स वचनम् इति, ता अस्य दक्षिणाः ॥४॥

Vedic cosmos was self-sufficient and self-perpetuating [unlike the Greek cosmos, which implied pre-established harmony. A stabilized order is brought within the phenomena from outside].

Order is immanent in the Indian cosmos. It is not an externally determined law. If so the non-violence appears to be the immanent order of the world. The sooner we realize this or de-codify the language of nature, the better.

Notes :

1) For Jainas, violence is one of the eighteenth deadliest sins. It is the very foundation of Jaina ethics. But the observance of non-violence is based on its Anekanta Philosophy. It is the mental condition which will be the detrimental force behind the act of violence or non-violence. An apparently violent act may be non-violent and vice-versa, depending upon the mental condition of the performer. The entire world is pervaded by living creatures and constantly they may be facing violence. Therefore it is the caution with which one interacts with the world that matter ultimately. This analysis will certainly presupposes an attitude of many points of views. So it is the right attitude which leads to the right knowledge and then to the right conduct.

2) Gandhiji said that Ahimsa means "No crusading mission of mercy, no forthright adventure of loving-kindness, but a neutral 'aseptic' evaculation from the Spirit of the will to hurt.

3) English traveller Ralph Fitch who travelled in Bengal in the 16th Century says Chinese believed in "Natural Sympathy and active compassion." In India Ahimsa was for merit earning. A device, it was a credit - earner in the treasuries of Heaven !

   It does not arise from the feeling of compassion.

   Institutions of charity built by them are not out of ethic of love, but of discipline to achieve freedom from rebirth.

4) Albert Schweitzer is of the opinion that the most ancient Hindu thought hardly knows sympathy with animal creation.

5) AV Sanhita-trans. by Dwight Whitney 2 Vols.

6) Hyms of Rigveda- Various translations

7) 'The wonder that India was' (p.293) A. L. Basham.

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Teachings of Lord Buddha

The teaching of Lord Buddha may be divided into two groups : (i) philosophical, and (ii) moral. The two groups are interwoven in such a way that the one cannot be understood properly without a knowledge of the other. The fundamental principle of the Buddha's philosophy is the theory of Causation or Dependent Origination. According to this theory, the countinuous existence of a being is like a wheel of causes and effects. Ignorance gives rise to actions, then in their turn come consciousness, phenomena (nama-rupa), the six senses, contact, feeling, craving, grasping, becoming, birth and sufferings. If the last effect is to be destroyed, the primary cause, which is ignorance, must be destroyed.

Another important theory of the Buddha concerns the Four Noble Truths, the first being that all existence is full of suffering. The second truth is that all suffering has a cause. The third truth is that suffering can be made to come to an end and the last that there is a way to end suffering.

The critics of Buddhism will no doubt consider the first two truths pessimistic but the other two certainly provide grounds for optimism. Why does the Buddha say that the existence of a being is full of suffering ? Because all beings are subject to rebirth, decay, disease, death, and, again, rebirth. Even pleasures and worldly happiness lead one to sorrow because they are transitory.

and the loss of pleasure and happiness is worse than never to have had them.

Just as a good doctor tries to discover the cause of the malady before administering a remedy, the Buddha, the great spiritual doctor, tried to find the ultimate cause of worldly suffering, not only the suffering of human beings but that of all animate creatures. He found the cause to be ignorance or craving arising from it. The doctor removes the cause of the patient's disease and thus cures it. The Buddha similarly asks the people to remove their ignorance of truth and their craving for happiness. The cessation of suffering is called nirvana, the summum bonum, beyond logical reasoning and beyond description. It is not a negative condition but a positive, unconditioned state realized by the mind.

How can this nirvana be attained ? By the Fourth Noble Truth, the Noble Eightfold Path. It is also called the Middle Path by which the wayfarer avoids the two extremes. He neither follows the path of self-mortification not that of self-indulgence. During the Buddha's time ascetics often observed fasts, led abhorrent lives, exposed themselves to fires burning around them or slept upon spikes thinking that the mind was exalted by torturing the body. Like the Epicureans of Europe, the self-indulgent seekers thought nothing of this world and the next, of rebirth, karma and its fruit, and led lives of luxury and sin. The Buddha's Path followed neither, but led to vision, knowledge, tranquility and nirvana. Formulated by the Buddha, it is an evidence of his logical reasoning and practical wisdom. Each step in the process is an inevitable advance on the path leading to the ideal.

The first step is the *right view*. Rid yourself of all superstitions, animism and primitive rites, give up your faith in the cruel animal or human sacrifice, in the inequality of human beings, and in the existence of a prime creator of the universe and depend on your own powers of pure reasoning. This step gave Buddhism its rational basis. If one's view is wrong, one's determination is bound to be faulty. *Right mental resolve* is the foundation of all great achievements provided it is based on the right view. If one believes in racial, social or communal discrimination, one's determination is sure to prove baneful to the world. *Right speech* results from right determination and action is preceded by speech. Words free from lies, anger, abuse, calumny and slander are the right speech which is followed by *right action*. Abstinence from killing, stealing, indulgence in passions and from drinking intoxicants is the negative aspect of right action, while charity, truth, service, and kindness constitute the positive one.

Right livelihood is the outcome of right action. Wrong means of livelihood are those which cause suffering to others. Trafficking in deadly weapons, in animals for slaughter, in human beings for slavery and intoxicating drinks and poisons are examples. A monk is not allowed to do any bodily service for a layman in exchange for food or clothing. He must earn his alms only by his goodwill towards others. *Right effort* consists in strenuous endeavour by a person for his own mental and moral elevation. He should first give up his bad habits, acquire new good ones, keep himself free from evil tendencies and promote the good qualities that he may have acquired already. The Buddha lays great stress on his step which he counted among the ten perfections (paramitas) that a Bodhisattva must achieve before his enlightenment. *Right mindfulness* is the attention paid to the activities and weaknesses of one's body and mind. The last step in the middle path is *right concentration,* the fixing of the mental faculties on a single object. This ability is useful not only to the spiritually inclined but is essential in all pursuits, whether they are scientific, literary, artistic or religious.

The Middle Path is aptly set forth in the following verse :

Of all sin the avoidance,
Of merit the acquisition,
Of mind the purification,
This is the Buddha's admonition.

Speaking of this Noble Eightfold Path, Dr. Rhys Davids says : "If this Buddhist ideal of perfect life is remarkable when compared with the thought of India at that time, it is equally instructive when looked at from the comparative point of view."[2]

The Buddha accepted the ancient Indian theory of karma. It lays down that the deeds of a being determine the state of life into which he will be reborn. "We find inequality prevailing everywhere. Some are born rich, others poor; some are beautiful, others ugly; some are intelligent, others witless. What is the reason of this?" asked King Milinda. His teacher replied that this anomaly was due to the karma of each being in his former life and quoted the Buddha's words in support. "Every living being has karma as its master, its inheritance, its congenital cause, its kinsman, its refuge. It is karma that differentiates all beings into low and

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1. Dhammapada 183.
2. American Lectures, p.139.

high states."[1] The karma or deed may be mental, oral or physical. Its nature is judged by the accompanying volition. Involuntary or unconscious acts are not treated as karma.

According to the Buddhist doctrine of karma, one is not always compelled by an iron necessity to go through worldly joys and sorrows from one life to another. Karma is not predestination imposed on us by some mysterious creator to which we must helplessly submit ourselves. Though of pre-Buddhist origin, the doctrine of karma was highly developed by the Buddha and his followers, who held that a being possesses the freedom of will to act, irrespective of his acts in his previous births. Existence, whether in bad or good conditions, is impermanent though the latter is the better of the two. The best is freedom from karma, naiskarmya, leading to Arhatship and consequently to nirvana (moksa of the Brahmanical philosophy), the total extinction of personality. During one of his sermons, the Buddha pointed to the flame of a lamp, saying it was passing through a cycle of rebirth and death. Then he blew out the flame and said, "The flame is now extinguished. It will not burn any longer. The same is the case with an Arhat who attains nirvana (lit. extinction) for he will be born no more."[2] Nirvana has a secondary meaning when it stands for the extinction of the springs of action : craving, hatred, delusion (moha), or their opposites.

Nirvana, the ideal, requires constant spiritual exercise and contemplation. Before soaring into the subtle regions of thought, the yogin or the spiritual aspirant cultivates the four noble sentiments,

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1. Milinda, 65.
2. Samyutta, I, 159 ; ef. Suttanipata, 233

Brahmaviharas, which give a foretaste of life in the Brahma world. Metta or universal love, karuna or compassion, mudita or sympathetic joy and upekkha or equanimity are the four sentiments which know no bounds of time, space or class. The Buddha imbued the robber Angulimala's mind with metta and the robber was converted into a spiritual wayfarer. When your fellow beings are in misery, you must feel compassion for them and when they are happy you must feel happiness. These feelings are not restricted to mankind alone but cover all beings, past, present, future, whether of this world or of other worlds. Equanimity should be so real that you should feel the same towards a man who besmears your arm with sandal paste and one who hacks your other arm with an axe. Universal love and equanimity are also regarded as the perfections (paramitas) of the Bodhisattva.

The code of morality of the Buddhist is mainly founded on the Buddha's word, while the Buddha himself repeatedly says that the Dharma is ancient and passed on by the ṛṣis or holy men from age to age. The rules of conduct for the monks and nuns are definite and are given in the Book of Discipline. The ideal of the monastic order is nirvana while that of lay devotees, or worldly folk, is rebirth in a higher heaven. They perform meritorious acts, give charities to monks, brahmanas and the indigent people, worship their ancestors and observe fasts four times every month. The lay devotees take the vow to follow the five commandments (silas) throughout their lives. They are forbidden to deprive any animal of its life, to take what is not given, to tell falsehood, to commit adultery and to use intoxicants. For days when fasts are to be observed, there are three additional prohibitions.

The Buddha disapproved of superstitious rites and ceremonies and degrading ascetic practices. He strove to remove caste distinctions. As he says :

> One does not become a brahmana by birth.
> One does not become an outcast by birth.
> One becomes a brahmana by act,
> One becomes an outcast by act.[1]

The Buddha condemned violence against others in any form whatsoever. Sacrifices in which animals -- and sometimes human beings -- were killed and battles in which men were put to the sword were condemned by him. Forbearance, according to him, was a greater virtue than the exercise of the martial spirit. He wanted every man to be virtuous and wise and not only a chosen few. He preached the dharma for the welfare and happiness of everyman *(bahu-jana)*. He said, "O, monks, go on a round for alms to different places. Don't go twain to the same place to preach the Dharma." He used the mother tongue of the people for his sermons instead of an artificial language understood only by the learned few. The Buddha's religion is not a dogmatic and elaborate system of rites, runes or prayers but a way of life, of purity in thinking, speaking and acting. The Buddha was the first rationalist of the world who asserted that one was one's own saviour and master without reference to any outside power.

Ref. : '2500 years of Guddhism' published by Govt. of India.

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[1] Suttaninata 641.

Book Review

Kanakadasa : *by Basavaraj Naikar, Published by : National Book Trust, New Delhi, India. 2001. Pages 115, Price Rs. 40.*

"Footfalls of God echo in the memory. Through faith we understand that the words were framed by the Word of God, so that things which are seen were not in a strange country." (New Testament, Hebrews : 11:3). We should accord with open hearts a grand praise to Dr. Basavaraj Naikar for penning down "word of God through the footfalls of the Golden Servant of Lord Hari - Adikeshava of Kaginele and the Director, National Book Trust, India for commissioning the biography of Sant Kanakadasa. The writer with D. Litt from the University of California has a rare touch of intuitive perception of the theme of saint, sainthood, Godhead and their commitment to the society in which he is born.

This National Biography at its zenith reveals the full spirit of Hindustani Vaishnavite tradition in it. Basavaraj has aptly confessed that this "booklet" is to be a "monograph" and to serve as a "critical introduction" to the celestial life on this earth of Timmappa, son of Biregouda and his most elegant devotional and musical poetry. He is successful in "arousing" devotional curiosity in the hearts and souls of readers who are devout lovers of such classical literature. Nay, it is nectar in words.

The unique life of this Bard of Bada is divided into thirteen chapters. The narrative begins with a short but highly meaningful survey of "Bhakti Movement" in India by appropriate conclusion of Vyasa Kuta and Dasa Kuta in Karnataka. The central issue of this retrospection and introspection of Bhakti enables the readers to enter into the "Hall of Fame of Immortal Saints." Naikar is right in pointing out that the path of devotion helped the masses to experience intuitively and seek empirical perception and get dawned upon the omnipresence of God. This Pan-Indian movement is the grand invisible and unbroken binding and linking and sustaining force of Hindustani cultural heritage in the light of grand collapses of all Egyptian, Greek, Chinese and other cultures in the bygone past. The all-pervasive survey of this Hindustani Bhakti cult is worth nothing and contemplating one and to be read again and again in order to get imprinted the importance of Bhakti cult. The unbroken chain of saints right through Nayanmars, Alwars, Andals, Shri Ramanuja, Shri Ramanand, Kabirji, Sant Basaveswara, Allamprabhu, Siddharama, Ambigara Chaudayya, Madivala Machideva, Akkamahadevi, Lalleshwari of Kashmir, Mirabai, Narsi Mahta, Surdas, Jayasi, Nandadas, Jaidev, Chandidas, Guranga Mahaprabhu (Chaitanya Mahaprabhu), Nivruttinath Mantor of Dnyaneshwar), Sopankaka, Muktabai, Changdev, Namadev, Janabai, Gorakumbhar, Eknath the Great, Tukaram the Great, Guru Nanakdev and their ten gurus is absorbing beyond description. It drives home the unique chain of the saints in every province.

"Background, Life and Time of Kanakadasa" provides the readers with the bare physical aspects of this divine soul. It reads like a miracle when we come across "Timmappa succeeded in persuading his father to establish a bell-metal-icon of Lord Hanumanta in the temple of Adikeshava. The story of his archenemy Mallanayaka and his daughter's spontaneous love for Timmappa is a spellbinding one. The anecdote of accidental finding of a treasure of gold-coins and its selfless distribution by Timmappa to the poor and for religious festivals is most striking example of his behaviour. Hence the people considered Timmappa a great donor and began to address him as "Kanakappa", or "Kanakaraj", or "Kanakanayaka" (General Kanaka). The dream sequences and other mundane instances made Kanakaraj to delve deep into the depth of his mind, heart and soul. This incident made him to surmount his own adamantine "pride and ego". Kanakappa began to dance in divine frenzy by meditating upon God. He gave his promise to Lord upon his asking that he would become his "dasa" (servant). The course of Kanakadasa's life was transformed from worldliness to deep spirituality due to the contingent circumstances of his life. Kanakadasa clad himself in a "dhoti" up to his knees, a black woolen blanket upon his left shoulder, a turban on his head and a pair of thick slippers under his feet. He slung a monostringed instrument "Ekanada" on his right shoulder a begging basket from his left shoulder and held a pair of castanets in his left-hand fingers. The emotive stance of preacher, pupil and other incidents connected with Shri Vyasaraya Swami and Kanakadasa shed a floodlight on the then prevalent caste-system in Hindu people and its evil effect on the society. There are more than two dozen such anecdotes which are presented as eye openers to Brahmin disciples of Vyasaraya. But the adamantine and blind disciple was beyond mending. Shri Vyasaraya is the sole divine souled preacher to perceive the worth of gemlike

Kanakadasa. The most poignant description of the great Guru-shishya is presented in an inimitable style and exquisite words. The final summary of his life, "Thus did Kanakadasa, the great saint of Karnataka led a life of intense devotion and spirituality. Having abandoned all the material wealth and glory, he dedicated himself to the service of God and Man and perceived God in all the animate and inanimate things of the cosmos. And as an eternal pilgrim, he visited many places of pilgrimage in and around Karnataka. An innate poet and musician, he composed a number of devotional poems to celebrate the glory of Lord Vishnu and awakened a deep devotional awareness in the masses to help them accomplish God realization through active participation in the worldly life itself." This is the yeomen's service for which the lives of the saints stand out as colossal lighthouses to lead kindly light to the masses. From *Mohan Tarangini* to *Mundiges* (Chapters 4 to 9), Dr. Basavaraj has taken a fine and short resume of all literary treasures produced by Kanakadasa. In this role of literature Kanakadasa can be compared to saint Eknath Maharaj of Maharashtra or Tulsidasji of Utter Pradesh etc. The great wealth of Kanakadasa's inimitable magnum opus consists of *Mohana Tarangini, Nala Charitra, Rama Dhanya, Hari Kathasara, Kirtanas,* and *Mundiges.* It is an eternal riddle as to how Kanakadasa could handle all these literary works of art ably. *Mohana Tarangini* is an epic that has its unique grandeur in the Kannada of the Middle Ages. The poem celebrates the legend of Pradyumna who kills Tarkasura. The story is readable like any one of the epic stories from the *Iliad,* the *Odyseey,* and the *Aenead* etc. This is the most popular epic poem in Kannada along with the master poets in Kannada language like Pampa, Ranna, Harihara, Raghavanka, Kumaravyasa, Chamarasa, Durgasimha, Nagavarma and Nagachandra. The intense intention behind the composition of *Mohana Tarangini* is to enhance the impulse of human devotion to Lord Hari (as Vitthal in Maharashtra, Giridhar in Rajasthan, Lord Rama in UP, MP and Bihar, Krishna in Bengal etc.) paving the way for the general human welfare and spiritual upliftment. The poem does bear relevance to the Vijayanagara Empire and the great Emperor Krishnadevaraya. It is spread over more then twelve thousand lines and Kanakadasa employed a variety of figures of speech or tropes in *Mohana Tarangini,* the simile (as is a case with prince of poets, Kalidasa) happens to be the dominant trope in it. This is certainly going to "awaken and arouse" the sensitive reader to reach for the book in original to seek its appreciation.

Nala Charitra in "Bhamini Shatpadi" of nearly three thousand lines is another most popular epic-in-fragment composition. To compose the Nala Damayanti suffering was a challenge worth taking because more than forty pundits in Sanskrit and thirteen poets in Kannada had already attempted this legendary story with tremendous success and the King Harshavardhana was the leading literary figure amongst them. This story is told in the most enrapturing words and phrases in "limpid Kannada". "There Kanakadasa has employed occasional folk-element, comprehensible Bhamini shatpadi stanza form, euphony and befitting similes. The greatness of this narration and all the poetic devices are monitored to bring home the dominant sentiment of compassion in a very touching manner."

Ramadhanyacharitre is a real creative product of

Kanakadasa's divine imagination. It is autobiographic in nature. Kanakadasa is at heart a 'rebel' who protested against the evil of casteism and communalism. He wanted to uplift the downtrodden people to an elevated level of dignity. In this sense Kanakadasa is a protestant saint poet after Basaveswara, Dynaneshvar, Namdev, Sena Nhavi and other saints. The allegory of rice and millet is not to be found in the *Ramayana* of Valmiki. It is a clever brainchild of Kanakadasa. It was grafted into the story of *Ramayana* purely for the purpose of social amelioration. The didactic message of this poem is that the character of a person should be perceived from his 'intrinsic worth' rather than from the accident of his birth. This has found and excellent literary feature of mock-epic poem and can be compared to Alexander Pope's "The Rape of the Lock" as far as technique is concerned. It does have parallels in "Battle of Books", "Tale of Tub" by great satirist Jonathan Swift. This poem holds a mirror to his creative inventiveness, deep social concern and bold experimentation. It exhibits in a artistic manner Kanakadasa's righteous indignation at the social segregation of low-caste people and their exploitation by high-caste ones. It has been satirized through the allegory of rice and millet and the final victory of millet over rice. Symbolically Kanakadasa celebrates the victory of the downtrodden. Kanakadasa has enriched the Kannada literature by composing this poem. He has made use of the folk dialect of 16th century Karnataka.

Hari Katha Sara is a devotional narrative, which depicts the need for harmonious relationship between Man and God. Kanakadasa has compressed the vast knowledge of Hindu mythology, philosophy and yoga etc. and has articulated it in a simple language understood easily by the layman. Kanakadasa is at his best in the 'Kirtanas' and 'Mundiges' of rare beauty and excellence in common language used by the masses. Kirtanas are the very soul of his character and persona. Through his whole life preaching and teachings he teaches the simple philosophies. These are the best in specific "verbal beauty and superb imagery." These are classified into i) Devotional, ii) Philosophical and iii) Spiritual. They are in a special class themselves. These are of great instructive value to the masses. They touch almost all faces of human life. These Kirtanas are infused with grand devotional sentiment. It is on account of their musical element that these Kirtanas succeed in capturing the heart and soul of the masses and the scholars alike. They are undoubtedly rich treasures of spiritual truths. Kanakadasa has composed many *"Mundges"* or folk-riddles-puzzles. They resemble "Yaksha Prashna" of Mahabharata. The *Mundiges* offer challenges to scholars to interpret them correctly. They also remind us of such "Abhangas" of Muktabai of Maharashtra.

In the last four chapters Dr. Naikar just presents glimpses of Kanakadasa's grand contribution to music, folk element in his kirtanas, his language and it is concluded with specimens of ten of his different kinds of kirtanas.

Professor Basavaraj concludes the small but highly critical booklet on a high not of hope. He opines. "There is ample scope for researchers to study the themes, imagery and technique with those of the other poets like Vemana, Dnyanadev, Namadev, Guru Nanakadev, Tulsidasji, Surdasji, Mahatma Kabir, Metaphysical poets like John Donne, George Herbert, St. Teresa and St. Augustine from a comparative point of view fruitfully and arrive at some universal patterns of religious and mystic literature." The study will naturally lead to the scholastic study of literatures across and beyond national linguistic boundaries. The national blueprint and practice of Comparative Literature have been cultivated especially in Europe (Germany and France etc.) and U.S.A. If it is cultivated in Hindustan we are bound to produce some fine work of scholarship and interpretation with the aid of its admixture of historical and synthetic methods.

The discipline of regional comparative religion will contribute greatly to our knowledge of Bhakti cult Movement in various provinces of India. It will encourage us to identify recurring patterns of various beliefs and practices amongst Hindu people widely separated by boundaries of languages and geography. But all these Movements of Bhakti cult in each and every province have a strong inner current and vitality of elevating effect of devotional poetry. It is a common link that should be the literary target of our study of these divine saints.

Let National Book Trust Commission such a project and scholars and devotees like Dr. Basavaraj and company be the vanguard bearers of this project. If it becomes successful, then Hindustan is going to be a Super Power in the Third Millenium proposed by the great Yogi Shri Arvind Ghosh and Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

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ACPR's INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR HOLISTIC EDUCATION :

Model Holistic School for catching ACPR's Unity theme with the children and tender youth' world over, of all faiths and religions.

School for refreshing re-orientation to be modelled as a training center for Academicians, Legislators, Administrators, Leaders/Intellectual spokesmen of the Society.

Special centre for rural awareness.

ACPR's PRINTING AND PUBLICATION CENTRE

BUILDINGS :

Residential Quarters for the selected seniormost executive/office bearers.
Hostels for research students.
Guest house.

AUDITORIUM FOR SEMINARS, CONFERENCES AND SYMPOSIUMS.

CO-ORDINATING ADMINISTRATIVE HEADQUARTERS.

ACPR : AN ALL-MILLENNIUM GLOBAL GALLERY FOR HOLISTIC HUMAN WELFARE

FOOTPRINTS ON THE SANDS OF TIME

A Profile of ACPR

Global Mission of a Mystic Visionary

A PRESENTATION BY ACPR, BELGAUM FOUNDED BY GURUDEO Dr. R. D. RANADE

ACPR'S
GOLDEN JUBILEE
AGENDA

Pursuit for
Global Awareness
for

ONE GOD
ONE WORLD
ONE HUMANITY

"ACPR is the Global Call for Awareness of Unity given by the Modern Prophet Gurudeo Dr. R. D. Ranade. Humanity is the New Religion. Rational Mysticism is the new secular language, where faith joins Reason............Divine Art of living and Growing in Peace is the wisdom to be acquired and ever updated........ACPR is Humankind's school for continuous learning.......A new Temple of knowledge.......with Unity of God ....,.Religion may vanish if Philosophies dawn to assert; Philosophies may vanish if Mysticism dawns to assert; and Holistic welfare of entire humankind may dawn if God asserts the mission of ACPR"

Prof. N. R. Deshpande
Chairman of ACPR's
Board of Trustees

ACPR'S 49 YEARS **FOOTPRINTS**
HAVE USHERED INTO **GOLDEN PATHWAY**
FOR GLOBAL HUMANITY

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